

From organizing events with her church to her civic involvement within her community, wherever Virginia goes, you know that she is on a mission to serve, and she will not be deterred in that mission.

Truly, she is a community-driven woman. I cannot overstate her rock-ribbed conservatism and how she has always espoused, promoted, and shared both the values and principles upon which our constitutional republic was founded.

The simple truth is that we need more Virginia Smiths in this world.

Her work as chairwoman and as a proud member of the Stokes County community has helped lay a foundation upon which our future leaders, the young men and women of today, can grow and thrive.

Mr. Speaker, as Virginia enters this new and exciting chapter of her life, may she know that she has left an indelible mark upon the lives of so many people, me included. I am confident she will continue to do so.

May God continue to bless her and her family in the days ahead.

#### REASONABLE RAISING OF DEBT CEILING

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, with \$31.4 trillion in national debt, House Republicans are committed to finding a solution that is reasonable, sensible, and responsible regarding raising the debt ceiling.

President Biden would be irresponsible not to negotiate. We must finally address Washington's reckless government spending if we want to put America on a better fiscal path.

After 2 years of reckless deficit spending, the Biden administration is refusing to negotiate with Republicans to protect taxpayers and solve our Nation's debt crisis.

Democrats accelerated spending following the last massive debt limit increase. After passing the largest debt limit increase in American history, it took Democrats only a little over a year to max out the Federal Government's credit card again.

Democrats outspent record-high revenue. Despite record-high revenues from the Republican-passed Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Federal spending has continued to balloon, increasing by \$10 trillion over the last 2 years, a record for a new President.

There is a bipartisan path forward. Instead of refusing to negotiate, Democrats need to join Republicans in crafting a plan that protects taxpayers. All eight major spending reforms since 1985 have been attached to debt ceiling legislation.

We must be, again, as Republicans say, reasonable, sensible, and responsible regarding raising the debt ceiling. We call on President Biden and the Democrats to join us in this effort.

#### CELEBRATING WIND RIVER TRANSFER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. PEREZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to be a voice for my rural community and celebrate the passage of the Wind River Administrative Site Conveyance Act.

Before being sworn into Congress, I acted with my predecessor, JAIME HERERA BEUTLER, Senator CANTWELL, and members of the Skamania County Commission to pass the Wind River Administrative Site Conveyance Act in the fiscal year 2023 spending bill.

As a Skamania County resident, I know that only 1.8 percent of our land is fully taxable for generating necessary revenue for community services. The Wind River Administrative Site Conveyance Act transfers 24 acres back into the county land base and increases opportunity for small businesses in our community.

I thank my predecessor, JAIME HERERA BEUTLER, and Senator CANTWELL for leading this effort. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass similarly important legislation.

#### RECOGNIZING REPAIR CLARK COUNTY

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to be a voice for my community and share with you the importance of Repair Clark County.

Repair Clark County is a nonprofit organization that rejects the premise that when things break, we just throw them out, that we are helpless consumers reliant on an endless cycle of cheap goods.

I was lucky to attend one of their events on January 21, and I saw a little girl light up when her favorite night-light was fixed instead of being thrown away. What an amazing gift to teach this child that we can have a relationship of stewardship with our belongings, not just consumerism.

These volunteers uphold our values of stewardship and self-sufficiency because, in America, DIY is in our DNA.

I thank Terra Heilman, the head of Repair Clark County, for spearheading this effort.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work on Federal legislation that ensures all consumers have the right and the ability to maintain and fix their own stuff.

#### RECOGNIZING IURBAN TEEN

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the iUrban Teen organization for creating an incredibly diverse talent pipeline in my district.

iUrban Teen provides skills training for teens and young adults and gives them access to career pathways and alternatives that they need to be successful and have more opportunities.

For example, the Future Teachers Pathway program brings together Vancouver Public Schools, Washington State University Vancouver, and Clark College to mentor students and give them the training they need to succeed in their chosen career paths.

This is so critical for young people who face challenges and gives them the support they deserve in their efforts to

become critical members of our community.

For the past 13 years, iUrban Teen has hosted a breakfast on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. I was honored to attend their event.

I thank the iUrban Teen team for bridging the gap for students and inspiring all of us to keep working for change.

#### HONORING MIKHAIL PAVENKO

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mikhail Pavenko, a resident of Vancouver, Washington.

In 1996, Mikhail emigrated from Ukraine to Vancouver, and he has proudly worked as a lineman for the Clark County Public Utilities since 2014, literally keeping the lights on in my district.

Mr. Pavenko has recently taken on a new role. Since the conflict between Ukraine and Russia began, he has returned to Ukraine more than a dozen times to serve as a volunteer military chaplain.

Mikhail is and continues to be a beacon of light for many during times of untold suffering. He inspires Ukrainians on the front line to keep the faith and keep up the fight, and he simultaneously reminds all of us that democracy is worth fighting for.

I cannot thank Mr. Pavenko enough for his service to the people of Ukraine as they stand together against authoritarianism.

#### CONGRATULATING THE COLUMBIA RIVER RAPIDS GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give a big shout-out to the Columbia River Rapids girls volleyball team. They are doing an incredible job. I am so excited to share this on the House floor.

The Rapids girls volleyball team won the 2A State title in three sets, finishing an amazing season for the volleyball team. The entire tournament, they only lost one set. What makes this even more notable is they were a No. 6 seed, and they defeated three higher seeds to attain this title.

These incredible young women played an impressive season and have made me and our whole community very proud.

Congratulations to the Columbia River Rapids girls volleyball team on their amazing accomplishments. I am so excited to see what they will do next season.

#### HONORING BROTHER FRED WOLFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CARL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of a dear friend of mine, Brother Fred Wolfe.

Fred Hartwell Wolfe was born December 5, 1936, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and he passed away on January 3, 2021. I was standing on this very floor being sworn in the moment they let me know he had passed away.

To so many people in this country, Fred Wolfe was a friend. He was a spiritual leader. He was a life coach. He was a father figure. He was a big brother. That is why we all simply called him Brother Fred.

□ 1015

Brother Fred had a God-given ability to make everyone feel special, and he truly believed that everyone was special. Every waking moment in Brother Fred's life, he understood that God was not only watching him, but God knew exactly what His next step would be in Fred's life.

Brother Fred, on numerous occasions, would tell me that everything in our life is controlled by God, and everything was put here to serve God.

Later in life, Brother Fred's health started breaking down, but he never took his eyes off of God. I remember when he had open-heart surgery and the men from the church would stay with him to take care of his needs. One night when I was there with Brother Fred, I asked him how his open-heart surgery had played a role in God's master plan.

He told me, I don't know. He said, It is part of the plan, but I don't know. I am here to serve. I thought that was a pretty strange response seeing he just had his chest cracked open and everything moved around. But he knew he would wait. He told me, We may never know; then again, we may.

Just a few minutes later, a nurse came walking in to take his vital signs—of course, as they do in the hospitals and keep you awake all night—while doing so, he smiled at Brother Fred and said, You don't remember me, but a few years ago, I got saved under your ministry.

Unfortunately, I have slipped away from God, and I am paying the price in my family today.

With all the tubes, with all the monitors, with everything going off in that room, Brother Fred stopped what he was thinking and doing and prayed with that man. He left with much higher spirits than he actually entered with.

As we sat there quietly, I was thinking, Did God use Fred Wolfe in this position because of this man? I looked up and made eye contact with Fred, who was laying in the bed, he simply winked and rolled over and went to sleep like he knew that was the answer.

For thousands of people who were saved under his ministry, raised their family with his wisdom, and learned that God is the most important thing in their life, I say this is not good-bye, for we will see you again. We will see Miss Anne, and we will see Brother Fred at the right hand of God.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO DURANGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as some extraordinary Durango High School students are making news and scientific history.

A team from Nevada's Third District, Durango High School, recently became one of only 60 teams nationwide to win the NASA TechRise student challenge. This year the challenge was to design an experiment that could be tested on a NASA-sponsored balloon flight.

The Durango team won with their entry, Project Nighthawk, which they will continue to work on for the rest of the school year. This summer, the project will be tested in a high-altitude balloon flight.

This is a big deal, but I know it is just the start of some amazing endeavors into STEM that these Durango Trailblazers will make in their future careers. These students will be mentored by the best and the brightest researchers and have an invaluable opportunity to learn about the edge of the Earth's atmosphere.

The ingenuity of these talented Nevadans reminds us that when it comes to exploration of our final frontier, the best is yet to come. I have no doubt that we will all benefit from their contributions in years to come.

Congratulations, Durango High School's Project Nighthawk.

#### REINING IN OUR NATIONAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss our national debt. In 2022, Speaker MCCARTHY unveiled the Commitment to America which outlines the Republican platform for governing as we took control of the House in the 118th Congress.

Through our plan, it is critical we support policies that lead to a strong, healthy economy, fight inflation, and lower the cost of living. We must rein in reckless spending here in Washington and root out waste, fraud, and abuse in government.

For the last 2 years, the Biden administration has been left unchecked. Because of their policies, we have seen record-breaking inflation, skyrocketing gas and grocery prices, and increases to daily expenses. Hard-working families are forced to decide between feeding their families or paying the heat and electric bills.

These economic hardships are brought on by unrestricted reckless spending. That irresponsible spending stops now. With \$31.4 trillion in national debt, House Republicans are committed to finding a reasonable, practical, and responsible solution to raising the debt ceiling. Just like millions of Americans are forced to make difficult financial decisions to make ends meet, we must finally address out-of-control government spending if we want to put America on a better fiscal path.

Mr. Speaker, I heard from hundreds of my constituents who are concerned about America's checkbook. On December 16, 2021, Congress voted to increase the national borrowing limit to \$31.4 trillion, an increase of \$2.5 trillion more than the previous allowance. This bill kicked the proverbial can down the road until now when we are, once again, faced with raising the Federal debt ceiling even further.

In recent years, the Federal debt has ballooned because of many of the Biden administration's policies, including the student loan repayment pause and forgiveness, Congressional Democrats' multitrillion-dollar spending spree, and rising interest rates stemming from historic inflation.

The first step toward reducing the debt is controlling the annual deficit. To fully address the drivers of the national debt, Members of both parties and the President will have to come to an agreement in addressing unchecked mandatory spending and reckless discretionary spending priorities.

Mr. Speaker, as part of my commitment to America, I will continue to work to rein in government waste, fraud, and abuse, while limiting skyrocketing government program costs and finding solutions on reducing our national debt.

#### RAISING AND EXTENDING THE DEBT CEILING 78 TIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, since 1960, Congress has raised and extended the debt limit 78 times over a 63-year period.

Let's put this in perspective: 49 times under Republican administrations, 29 times under Democratic Presidents. Sixty-three years we have raised the debt ceiling 78 times.

We are one of only two democratic nations with a statutory debt ceiling and the only one, because of the magnificent extent of our country, the U.S. dollar being the common currency of the world that can threaten a global economic crisis—think about that—by playing around with the debt ceiling.

The debt ceiling has no impact on government spending. Why? Because it only commences to pay the bills that we have already committed ourselves to. Both Republicans and Democrats have passed legislation that has created debt, that requires us to pay Social Security, that requires us to pay other mandatory programs in which there has been bipartisan support for.

Instead, this debt ceiling restricts the Treasury, if, in fact, we do not lift the debt ceiling, from paying those bills. That is why for over 63 years, 78 times, the Congress has chosen to raise the debt ceiling. Why? Because we don't want to put the liability of the world's economy, let alone the U.S. economy, at risk.

We don't want to be deadbeats, right? I think most Americans feel they